

Feb. 14, 2017

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN BREVARD CELEBRATES AMERICAN HEART MONTH



### Contact:

Anita Stremmel  
Anita.Stremmel@flhealth.gov  
321-615-9323

**Merritt Island, FL**— February marks the beginning of American Heart Month and it is a great time to commit to a healthy lifestyle and make small changes that can lead to a lifetime of heart health and help fight heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in Florida and the nation.

“The perfect gift this Valentine’s Day is the gift of heart health,” stated Maria Stahl, Administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Brevard County. “Now is the time to take charge of your health and start new, heart-healthy behaviors that can help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.”

Each year, heart disease causes one in four deaths in the United States. There were 42,835 heart attack hospitalizations in Florida in 2014 or an average of 117 heart attack hospitalizations each day. About half of all Americans have at least one of the three risk factors for heart disease which include high blood pressure, high cholesterol and smoking. While all Americans are at risk for heart disease, the non-Hispanic black community is at the greatest risk.

Many of the risk factors for heart disease can be eliminated with diet, exercise and taking steps to quit smoking. During American Heart Month, follow these simple tips to keep your heart healthy and fight heart disease.

- Add exercise to your daily routine, even if it’s just taking regular walks with family and friends;
- Schedule a visit with your doctor to talk about your heart health;
- Increase healthy eating by cooking heart healthy meals; and
- Take steps to quit smoking by utilizing the [Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way Program](#).

Brevard organizations have a variety of activities and events related to American Heart Month, including the following:

- [Health First Seminars](#)
- [Wuesthoff Medical Center - Paint the Night Red for Heart Health](#)
- [American Heart Association - 2017 Brevard Heart Walk](#)

## About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health, please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov).